

The Renewal of Faith and Ecumenical Reconciliation under the Leadership of Pope Francis

Talk to Church Leaders of Scotland, Aberdeen

14 September 2013

Yesterday evening was six months since the election of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, sj as bishop of Rome, an event that is producing many surprises, of which the first was his choice of name, Francis. I want to reflect on the significance of this election that occurred in the middle of a Year of Faith called by Benedict XVI for the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. It is already clear that the new bishop of Rome will present many challenges to the Catholic Church, challenges whose ripples will no doubt also be felt in other Christian communions.

We may begin by asking what challenges will come from the election of a Latin American pope. You may know of a book by a scholar from the USA, called *The Next Christendom* by historian Philip Jenkins, which has already appeared in a revised edition (2007)¹. The two major conclusions Jenkins draws from his study of global Christianity in modern times are (1) “far from being an export of the capitalist West, a vestige of Euro-American imperialism, Christianity is now rooted in the Third World, and the religion’s future lies in the global South.”² and (2) this Christianity of the future will be overwhelmingly evangelistic, supernaturalist, Pentecostal-charismatic in style, also within the historic mission churches.³ One consequence of this shift is the phenomenon known as “reverse mission,” of zealous Christians coming from the Third World to re-evangelize the former mission-sending nations. The election of Pope Francis can be seen as a form of Catholic catch-up, for other Christian world communions have already been experiencing the new weight and influence of the churches from the global south being felt especially in their world-wide bodies, as at the Lambeth conferences of 1998 and 2008, and the election of Third World leaders to global responsibilities.⁴ But the election of Pope Francis heralds greater change than these other instances because the bishop of Rome has a universal authority that will quickly impact the Catholic Church on all continents.

What difference is this likely to make? We can already see from the first six months of Pope Francis that he is deliberately refusing all those accoutrements of the papal office that are survivals from the days of the papal monarchy and the papal court. He refuses to be a monarch in any sense, even an enlightened 21st century monarch. He has an ordinary armchair instead of a throne in the audience hall; it is placed on the same level as everyone else, not higher. He lives and eats with others in the Vatican guest-house instead of occupying the papal apartments in the Vatican palace. He wants to ride in a modest car, not in a limousine.

This refusal of everything reflecting privilege, patronage, and power is highly significant. It is not simply a matter of style. It flows from bishop Francis’ identification with Jesus;

¹ Philip Jenkins *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, revised and expanded edition, 2007).

² Jenkins, xi. “Over the last century, however, the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward, to Africa and Latin America.” (*ibid.* 1).

³ “For the foreseeable future, the characteristic religious forms of Southern Christianity - enthusiastic and spontaneous, fundamentalist and supernatural oriented - look massively different from those of the older centers in Europe and North America.” (Jenkins, 92).

⁴ Setri Nyomi as executive secretary for the World Communion of Reformed Churches; Ishmael Noko (Zimbabwe: 1994-2010) and Martin Junge (Chile: 2010-) for the Lutheran World Federation.

all he wants to be is a Christian, and a Christian leader. A Latin American, even one with Italian roots, sees the European cultural heritage differently from a European. This difference shows up immediately in the approach of Pope Francis to the New Evangelization, launched by John Paul II and further developed by Benedict XVI. Both these popes were deeply troubled by the secularization of Europe, and the distancing of Europe from its Christian roots. This concern featured prominently in their promotion of the New Evangelization. Pope Benedict has reflected deeply on the clash between Christianity and secularism, giving one of his most important addresses on the relations between faith-based and secular worldviews to the Houses of Parliament in Westminster in 2010. Francis is less focused on the problems arising from secularization, and is simply wanting to preach the gospel, especially to the poor and marginalized. The difference is not that Francis is strongly Christocentric. Benedict was remarkably Christocentric, very evident in his succinct weekly catecheses. The differences are more between the cast of mind of a European professor of theology and the heart of a Latin American pastor, both men of prayer.

Francis preaches in a personally challenging way with vivid images and phrases. Most of the time, he speaks simply of Jesus, rather than Christ or Our Lord. He can sound very Evangelical. And here we touch another remarkable aspect of this man. Latin America has seen a vast explosion of Pentecostal - charismatic forms of Christian faith that have made real inroads into the Catholic population. As a result, Catholic - Evangelical relations across Latin America were generally poor, with Catholic leaders typically seeing the Pentecostals as “sects” and financed from North America. Detailed studies have shown that this is not true. The fastest-growing Pentecostal groups in Latin America are largely indigenous. But the one Cardinal in Latin America who had developed positive relationships with Evangelical and Pentecostal leaders is Cardinal Bergoglio. I was told in Buenos Aires by a Pentecostal leader that a group of them prayed with the Cardinal each month over a period of ten years. “His election has been an answer to our prayers,” said Norberto Saracco, rector of Buenos Aires’s FIET seminary and co-leader of the capital city’s Council of Pastors. “Bergoglio is a man of God. He is passionate for the unity of the Church –but not just at the institutional level. His priority is unity at the level of the people.”⁵

Here I want to identify a major challenge that arises from this encounter of Evangelical evangelism and the Catholic sense of Church. Francis is following John Paul II and Benedict XVI in calling Catholics to personal conversion and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. George Weigel, the American Catholic commentator and biographer of John Paul II, is arguing that through Vatican Two and the recent Popes the Holy Spirit is producing an Evangelical Catholicism (the title of his recent book). Weigel is at pains, too much pain, to clarify that this is not importing anything from the Evangelical Protestant world - indeed the great weakness of his book is its failure to grapple with the ecumenical challenge - so why do I cite it? Because for Weigel the first characteristic of Evangelical Catholicism is “friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁶ The sixth characteristic: “Evangelical Catholicism is a biblically centered form of Catholic life that reads the Bible as the Word of God for the salvation of souls.”⁷ Each person has to be brought to a personal acceptance of Jesus as Saviour and Son of God. Now the challenge is how this relates to the Catholic insistence

⁵ Reported in *Christianity Today*.

⁶ *Op.cit.*, 56.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 74. The tenth and last is “Evangelical Catholicism awaits with eager anticipation the coming of the Lord Jesus in glory, and until that time, Evangelical Catholicism is ordered to mission - to the proclamation of the Gospel for the world’s salvation.” (*ibid.*, 85).

that all faith is ecclesial faith. The new encyclical letter, *Lumen Fidei*, signed by Francis, but clearly for the most part the work of Benedict, has a section on faith as essentially ecclesial. Here we read: “apart from this body, outside this unity of the Church in Christ, outside this Church which – in the words of Romano Guardini – “is the bearer within history of the plenary gaze of Christ on the world” – faith loses its “measure”; it no longer finds its equilibrium, the space needed to sustain itself. Faith is necessarily ecclesial; it is professed from within the body of Christ as a concrete communion of believers.”⁸ This poses the question: how does the emphasis on the personal response of faith belong to an ecclesial understanding of Christian life?

One of the dangers we have to avoid here is that of ideology, of doctrine deteriorating into ideology. This happens when we keep asserting the “doctrine” and ignore all the evidence that does not fit neatly into the theory and its accompanying assumptions. The avoidance of ideological responses requires a close attention to contemporary facts, to what is actually happening. For Christian leaders, this attention requires a spiritual discernment: not just to see what is happening, but to ask what here is the work of the Holy Spirit. One consequence of globalization, particularly of modern means of travel and communication, is that in most parts of the world there is far more mixing than ever before. Any past ideal of young Catholics going to Catholic schools, having Catholic friends, never visiting a Protestant church, is often unrealistic today. As Catholic priests we were taught to think of such contacts as dangerous. But might this be ideological thinking? Could not the greater mixing be opportunity for enrichment? Yes, we have to understand that Christian faith is intrinsically ecclesial by its inner dynamism, but the way things work out in people’s lives follow many patterns. Many young Catholics come to a faith conversion in free churches, especially Pentecostal and charismatic; some quickly become committed young Catholics, some join the church that impacted them, some return to the Catholic Church years later. The days when we could act to prevent such patterns are over. Two popular Evangelical-charismatic phenomena, Bible or discipleship training schools and Houses of Prayer with 24-7 prayer, are attracting many Catholics. The only answer to this is what Francis is doing: preaching and living the basic Gospel to the maximum.

This is an appropriate moment to mention another amazing contemporary phenomenon, the Alpha course. It is surely not simply coincidence that at almost the same time as Francis became bishop of Rome, Justin Welby became archbishop of Canterbury. I mention this here as archbishop Welby was a parishioner of Holy Trinity, Brompton, before entering theological college, and his call to ministry was influenced by Alpha. Apart from its numerical and geographical success, Alpha has managed to reach an extraordinary variety of Christian bodies from the new charismatic churches to the traditional Free churches, the Anglicans and the Catholics. 18 months ago I heard Nicky Gumbel give a talk, saying that in recent years the fastest growth of Alpha has been in the Catholic Church. At a leaders conference in London a couple of years ago, they had a substantial group of Catholic bishops from Latin America. He had recently returned from a visit to Rome, where he had meetings with several heads of Vatican departments, who he said were all strong supporters of Alpha. It is true that Gumbel has made strong efforts over the last 15 years to understand Catholic teaching and sensitivities, during which time HTB has built a strong relationship with Fr Raniero Cantalamessa.

While Alpha as a course has been developed for congregational or parish use with the assumption it will be led by the ordained priest or minister (often not true in its usage by Catholics), it is also used by some ecumenical groups. Because Alpha is evangelistic and

⁸ *Lumen Fidei*, 22.

expands above all by personal invitation many attending do not belong to the host congregation. In any case, the success of Alpha necessarily raises the issue of whether our differences belong more to the order of didache than to the basic kerygma. This is surely why Catholic leaders are able to commend an evangelistic course produced by Anglicans.

In the last few years there have been strenuous Catholic efforts to promote the New Evangelization. In fact, the term “evangelization” was rarely used in the documents of Vatican Two, where it typically referred to the work of missionaries on the mission field. The conciliar decision that necessitated new attention to evangelism and catechesis was the decision to restore the adult catechumenate. The resulting liturgical document known as the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults spoke of three phases of initiation: evangelization, catechesis and mystagogy. Here we have a recognition that the adult process to faith and baptism begins with proclamation of the gospel and a conversion. Since then, the official terminology changed to initial proclamation, catechesis, and mystagogy, with the whole process now being called Evangelization. But in these documents, particularly in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997), it is made clear that the process begins with an initial proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ aimed at eliciting an initial conversion. It is also clear that only those showing evidence of an initial conversion should be admitted to the catechumenate. My observation is that this is not well understood in the Catholic world, so that many priests are using RCIA as a way to interest people in the Catholic faith rather than preaching the Gospel to them. One of the most significant propositions coming from the last Synod of Bishops in Rome was Proposition no 9 on The New Evangelization and Initial Proclamation, “that guidelines of the initial proclamation of the kerygma be written.”

What is the basic kerygma or good news? It is fundamentally the proclamation of an event, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is proclaiming: something has happened that has changed the world. It is not teaching or doctrine. That comes later. Yes, the event has a meaning, so the Gospel is more than a man 2,000 years ago died and was raised from the dead. It is proclamation with information why this event is so meaningful. It is the Gospel of the Kingdom: it inaugurates something. It is this message of an extraordinary event that has the power to convert, to pierce and to change our hearts. There is an observable link between clear-cut presentation of the Gospel and clear-cut experience of conversion. The flip side: fuzzy message, fuzzy results.

A clear understanding of the distinction between kerygma and didache suggests that as churches and ecclesial communities we are not divided on the kerygma and its foundational meaning. This immediately raises the question of ecumenical evangelization.

Another Challenge from Globalization

I want to move now to several issues where southern-hemisphere Christianity poses major challenges to European and North American Christians, maybe especially to Europeans. These concern a more holistic approach to the human person, to society and to the surrounding creation, the place of healing in Christian ministry, and the role of deliverance and exorcism. For African and Latin American migrants to Europe, as also those from the Caribbean, our inherited patterns of worship - both Catholic and Protestant - seem very staid and undemonstrative, and frequently highly cerebral. The idea of a worship involving mind and heart but not touching the body is alien. To our foreign visitors our worship seems low on popular participation, being dominated by the ordained, whether Protestant preacher or Catholic priest. The Pentecostal and charismatic movements have accustomed many to a greater use of the body in the worship of God, and to a greater rapport between

preacher and people. In this world, preaching has little in common with a lecture or the reading of a prepared text.

Is this just a matter of different cultures and of different temperaments and tastes? While there are clearly such differences at work, I suggest that this is too easy a way out for us. Does not 21st century Western technological rational man also have deep emotional needs? Is there not often a deep disconnect within us white educated northern-hemisphere people between our rational selves and the deeper levels within us of psyche and spirit? At this point the important contribution of charismatic-type Christian faith links up with the holistic debate. We will return to the holistic question in relation to ecology and the future of our planet. But now I want to raise the question of healing. Today more and more people are aware of the close connection between personal health, bodily and mental, on the one hand, and the state of society on the other hand. I have been involved in ministry within the charismatic movement for over forty years. In the last period, when people ask for prayer, I usually begin by praying for the Holy Spirit to come. The Lord knows what they need much better than any of us. Now I have several times had the experience that immediately after placing hands on the person and asking for the Holy Spirit to come, they just start to scream and it does not quickly stop. Sometimes an uncontrollable sobbing is released. If order is the top priority, this is disorder that must be stopped. But if pastoral care is the top priority, what do you do? It depends on the situation and the maturity of those around - so it may be wise to take a screaming person out to another room where they will not disturb others - but what I have learned - not only from such incidents is that so many people, who outwardly look balanced and "normal", are carrying deep within them tremendous pain. Without exception, I have found that the screaming person has been carrying deep wounds, sometimes from sexual abuse, sometimes from beatings, sometimes from parental divorce. The screaming is letting the pain out. Another occasional reaction from invoking the Holy Spirit, and particularly from mentioning the name of Jesus, is of agitation, fear, even of a fierce hatred of the holy. This reaction is quite different from the screaming and it signifies something quite different. It suggests an involvement with the occult, with spiritualism, maybe even with Satanism. How widespread is this in our society? Much wider than we think. Just go and look in any bookshop! Books on the occult probably occupy ten times the space given to specifically Christian literature. This stuff is a big obstacle to evangelization and a grave danger to our young people.

These phenomena and reactions are well-known to the Pentecostals and charismatics of Africa, Asia and Latin America. They point to what I consider to be an area of real blindness in mainline European Christianity: the rejection of or disbelief in Satan and evil spirits as merely mythological in our rationalized and sanitized theologies since the Enlightenment. Our faith in the power of God to perform "signs and wonders," the biblical phrase, has suffered, particularly among the educated and theologically formed. Of my six years in seminary formation, and two years of further studies in moral theology, hardly anything prepared me to pray for healing or to deal with the massive problems caused by the occult. It was opening myself to the experience of the Holy Spirit in the charismatic renewal that led quickly to realize that the Holy Spirit wasn't the only spirit on active duty. In fact, this is what we see in the life of Jesus: immediately after he is filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism by John, he is driven into the desert where he is tempted by the devil. The ignorance on this subject has slightly improved in the last thirty years as there are more dioceses with an official exorcist than before. The Catholic canonical legislation still presumes a stable society of priest ministering to a stable community year in year out. In our mobile society, it is often unrealistic to contact the bishop as is

required for an exorcism⁹, as the people may be occasional visitors and those ministering not be from that place. I have several times encountered these phenomena during week-end conferences in different nations from where I live.

The widespread loss of faith in “the supernatural” has resulted in an attenuated preaching of the resurrection of Jesus. For many, the word “resurrection” has become a kind of symbol of an ongoing existence, a form of belief in immortality that requires no mighty act of God. In the New Testament, faith is above all acceptance of the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. As Paul says, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” (1 Cor. 15: 17-18). In Romans 4, we see that for Paul faith is intrinsically faith in a God “who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.” (Rom. 4: 17). Abraham, who is presented as the father of those who believe, “in hope he believed against hope” (Rom. 4: 18). He disregards the evidence of his eyes and his feelings as to his age and physical condition, as also for Sarah so that: “No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.” (Rom. 4:20-21). The Lord has promised that on the last day he will raise up those who are his own. Do we believe that he is able to do what he has promised? The faith of Third World Christians who expect and see signs and wonders accompanying the preaching of the Gospel challenges our sophisticated unbelief.

Towards a Humble Church

You here in Scotland do not need to be told anything about scandals in the Church. But I wonder if you have had the thought: maybe in the long run these things are the grace of God to humble the Church.

At another level it seems clear that Pope Francis was chosen among other factors to deal with abuses and corruption in the Catholic Church. This question is closely connected to Francis’s criticism of what he calls “the self-referential Church” the end of the monarchical papacy is also the end of the triumphalist Church. In the whole process of church renewal, the Lord is moving us from a triumphalist Church to becoming a humble servant Church. We always knew that as Christians we are called to be humble, but we did not think that way of the Church. We are not proud of ourselves, but we are proud of the Church. This has influenced our histories, so that our histories have had a distinctively triumphalist character, downplaying the shadow side and playing up the triumphs. This question is of course of huge importance for ecumenical relations.

Allow me to share with you how I was led into facing the dark side of church history. Although I first had a sense of being called to work for unity in 1955, this conscientization did not happen through my ecumenical experience. It happened through the Jewish people. Because of my involvement in the charismatic movement, and being led to study its history, I became aware of the people known as Messianic Jews, who are largely charismatic. They are Jews who are determined to live as Jewish disciples of Jesus, and do not want to join churches they see as Gentile churches. I remember going into Notre Dame in Paris with a Messianic Jewish leader, for whom it was a painful experience. I loved visiting medieval cathedrals, and my first reaction was anger that this Jew was disturbing my Catholic enjoyment of the medieval glories of Notre Dame. That was just the beginning, for the following year I was on a tour of Spain with Messianic Jews praying

⁹ Canon 1172 §1.

about the Spanish history. This introduced me to the deep suffering of the Jewish people, often at the hands of the Church.

This year I was with this same Messianic Jewish leader in Buenos Aires. We went to meet Cardinal Bergoglio, who had asked for this meeting to know more about Messianic Jews. We had a very moving meeting with the Cardinal for about 80 minutes. My Messianic brother shared about his coming to faith in Jesus, and about the vision he carried for the bringing together of Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ as is presented in Ephesians 2 and 3, in Romans 11 and 15, etc. At the end Cardinal Bergoglio just said, "This is from God", a new thing of the Holy Spirit. There was no discussion. He invited us to pray for him, he was leaving for the conclave the next week, and the Messianic brother prayed all that was on his heart for the new pope, that he would be fully open to this full vision of reconciliation. On our way to the lift, the Cardinal kept saying to my friend: "Pray for me, pray for me, pray for me."

Pope Francis is well aware of the shadow side of church history. The first evangelization of Latin America was the work of the missionaries and the conquistadores, a mixture of the Word and the sword. This is more recent than the European history of the initial evangelization. An issue of *The Tablet* about 6 weeks ago had a report on an exhibition in Paderborn, Germany, for the 17th centenary of the edict of Milan in the year 313. I quote a section on the "violent and often forced conversion of the pagans": "here it is described how the Saxons - and later the Scandinavians, Slavs, Hungarians and Russians - were overwhelmed by the sword. "Taufe oder Tod" "Baptism or Death" is the fitting title of this section of the exhibition."¹⁰ Now of course there is another side to this history: the remarkable evangelization of southern Germany and northern Italy by the Irish and Scottish monks of an era before Charlemagne, which was not accompanied by the sword.

I have lived for the last few years at the far east end of Austria, close to the border with Slovakia and where the Iron Curtain stood for over 40 years. Here one cannot be unaware of the debris of a bloody history. I have a little experience of the Czech republic, where the tragic history of John Hus and the Hussite wars still has deep effects on attitudes and the spiritual climate. So the healing of our divisions, the divisions among the churches and the original wound, the division between the Church and the Jewish people, cannot happen without the sins and evils of this history coming to the light and being confessed.

For the Catholic Church, the door was opened in the courageous action of John Paul II in calling for a Catholic confession of the sins of the past in the preparation for the Great Jubilee year of 2000. This was first made in his exhortation *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* in 1994, but it was developed further the following year in his encyclical on ecumenism *Ut Unum Sint*. Here he wrote: "Even after the many sins which have contributed to our historical divisions, Christian unity is possible, provided that we are humbly conscious of having sinned against unity and are convinced of our need for conversion. Not only personal sins must be forgiven and left behind, but also social sins, which is to say the sinful "structures" themselves which have contributed and can still contribute to division and to the reinforcing of division."¹¹

I suggest we can see the child abuse scandals as an instrument through which the Lord is humbling the Catholic Church and deepening the purification called for by John Paul II. These scandals have forced us to address not simply the sins of gravely disturbed priests,

¹⁰ Karen Schousboe "Against all the Odds," *The Tablet* 3 August 2013, p. 10.

¹¹ *Ut Unum Sint*, 34.

but the institutional malfunctioning that covered it up. We can see Francis' call to be purified from the "self-referential church" in the same light. The self-referential church is necessarily triumphalist and not humble. Francis describes it as a sick church. So purification is needed, and so is healing.

This humbling of the Catholic Church, now led by a visibly humble pastor, changes the terrain for ecumenism. How will our ecumenical relations change? I suggest that Francis will point us towards the importance of Christian relationships, of mutual honouring, and of heart-felt prayer together. In a Wednesday audience in June, Francis suddenly shared: "today, before leaving the house, I spent forty minutes, more or less, half an hour, with an Evangelical pastor and we prayed together, and sought unity."¹² A seemingly casual aside, but so significant: 30 - 40 minutes, that is not saying an Our Father together. This approach overcomes the unspoken barriers and suspicions, the long-standing and deep-rooted fears stemming from distrust. Only this total honesty of all parties before the Lord and only judge can clear away the debris of centuries.

Permit me to share another lesson from experience with the Messianic Jews. We discovered, Catholics and Protestants, with the Jews that we find ourselves in the same boat. I saw that when Catholics and Protestants gather, though we may have broken through to deep relations of respect and love, there remain traces of the background thought that when the chips are down, we are right. The Catholics think when all is said and done, we are the original church with an authentic apostolic succession down to our own day. The Protestants think when all is said and done, we are the truly biblical church that honours the Word of God and preaches the authentic gospel of salvation. But when we all found ourselves with the Jewish believers in Jesus, we couldn't think that way any more. Who were the first believers in Jesus? They were all Jews. Who were the first preachers and interpreters of the Word of God. The Jewish believers. This realization does not negate our deepest convictions, but it purifies them. It begins to eliminate some of the arrogant assumptions that have become mixed up with our faith profession.

The Poor and Social Justice

The election of Francis will also have major significance for the living out of the Gospel amidst poverty and injustice. Francis speaks of his vision of "a Church of the Poor for the Poor." What is this likely to mean in practice? It is clearly part of his vision for the renewal of the Church. A short reflection on developments of the last fifty years can highlight the new elements with Francis. Before Vatican Two, there had been seventy years of developing Catholic social teaching. It was largely based on natural law and the nature of man. Vatican Two launched a process of linking this social teaching with dogmatic and moral theology, in particular with Christology. This was expressed in *Gaudium et Spes* in two ways: in para. 22 in a kind of programmatic statement: "it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of humanity becomes clear. ... Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals humanity to itself and brings to light its very high calling." Secondly, the last paragraph of the four chapters in the first half of *Gaudium et Spes* sums up each point (the dignity of the human person, the human community, humanity's activity in the universe, role of the Church in the modern world) with a teaching on the person and mission of Jesus. The integration of Catholic social teaching with the different areas of Catholic theology was carried through by John Paul II and reached its apogee in Benedict XVI's

¹² June 19, 2013.

encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), which effects an integration of the claims of love (charity) and of justice. When I taught moral theology in the 1970s, love and justice were both important, but it seemed that love belonged to the personal realm, and justice to the social. Here Benedict XVI teaches: “Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity, and intrinsic to it. ... On the one hand, charity demands justice: recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples. ... On the other hand, charity transcends justice and completes it in the logic of giving and forgiving.”¹³

What will the ministry of Francis bring to this ethical-theological synthesis? First, we can see already in Francis how there is no trace of a dichotomy between theory and practice. Faith, devotion, love, action are all one. He integrates charity and justice by his love of the poor - not at a distance, but by going to them - to the favela in Rio as he had gone regularly to the poor suburbs of Buenos Aires, and to the African refugees at Lampedusa. His reaching out to the poor and the suffering flows from his grasp of the incarnation: he speaks of touching the poor as touching the flesh of Christ. This is not sentimental talk. Francis lives this integration of charity and justice, and it is expressed most clearly in his love of the poor. Under the leadership of Francis, it is possible that we will not have a new social encyclical; we may only have example and inspiration. That is probably what the Church now needs. For Francis, this is inseparable from evangelization. Not because we have to include a section of social teaching in the kerygma, but because following Jesus is accepting the way of love and of self-giving.

So I suggest that for all of us, from whatever tradition we come, there is a challenge here. With Francis emphasizing his ministry as bishop of Rome, it seems that he is consciously seeking to live as he believes all bishops should live.

The area of lived-out discipleship in love is another area of Christian coming together. It is again significant that Justin Welby has been a student of Catholic social teaching for some years, and it seems that when he met Pope Francis, they hatched some kind of joint project concerning the poor. When Welby was asked what kind of Pope he would like to see elected, he replied, “a man I can pray with.” A man he could pray with is a man he can work with. TBA. Watch this space.

¹³ *Caritas in Veritate*, para. 6.